

Message Text

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SUBJECT: MORALES BERMUDEZ PRESS CONFERENCE; VELASCO IS BETTER

SUMMARY. ON APRIL 1, PRIME MINISTER MORALES BERMUDEZ HELD A THREE-HOUR PRESS CONFERENCE. INTER ALIA, HE COMMENTED ON PRESIDENT VELASCO'S RECOVERY, THE ECONOMIC SITUATION AND THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS. HE SPOKE SOBERLY, WITHOUT REFERRING TO "IMPERIALISM" AS MOST VELASQUISTAS ARE WONT TO DO (SEE LAST PARA). END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT'S HEALTH. ACCORDING TO PRESS, PM SAID THAT VELASCO IS CONTINUING HIS VACATION AT PARACAS (SEASIDE RESORT) UNTIL APRIL 14. MORALES BERMUDEZ DECLARED THAT VELASCO HAD RECUPERATED WELL, AND IS REGULARLY DOING THE EXERCISES PRESCRIBED FOR HIM, AND MENTIONED THAT HE SAW THE PRESIDENT BLOW THE CORK OFF A BOTTLE AT 150 FEET USING A .22 CARBINE. PM SAID THE CABINET, WHICH HAS MISSED ITS LAST TWO WEEKLY SESSIONS, WOULD RESUME MEETINGS AT PARACAS NEXT WEEK. (VELASCO APPARENTLY DOES NOT WANT MORALES BERMUDEZ TO HOLD CABINET SESSIONS, OR POSSIBLY THE LATTER HAS NOT SOUGHT SUCH POWERS. A VERY JEALOUS MAN, IT WOULD APPEAR MORE LILELY THAT VELASCO DOES NOW WANT ANYONE ELSE PRESIDING OVER CABINET.)

2. ECONOMIC DIALOGUE. THE PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS TO EXPLAIN THE PURPOSE OF A SERIES OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

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BETWEEN MO-

EALES BERMUDEZ AND THE ECONOMIC MINISTERS AND THE PUBLIC. HE STATED THAT THE GOP WANTS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN ITSELF AND THE PEOPLE; THEREFORE THE PUBLIC AT LARGE IS INVITED TO ATTEND THE ECONOMIC DIALOGUES AND TO SUBMIT WRITTEN QUESTIONS. HE NOTED THAT A DIALOGUE IS NEEDED SO THAT THE PEOPLE CAN UNDERSTAND PERU'S DIFFICULT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. HE COMPARED THE SITUATION TO 1969, WHEN INTERNATIONAL CREDITS WERE REDUCED AS A RESULT OF PERU'S NATIONALIZATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PETROLEUM COMPANY. HE MADE SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE HICKENLOOPER AMENDMENT. PERU WAS ABLE TO OVERCOME ITS PROBLEMS THEN AND WOULD BE ABLE TO DO SO AGAIN AS IT FACED THE DIFFICULT WORLD ECONOMIC SITUATION. HE CALLED FOR SACRIFICE, NOT ONLY FROM THE BOTTOM UP BUT FROM THE TOP DOWN. (THIS WILL BE INTERPRETED AS A NEED FOR PERU'S PRIVILEGED MILITARY CASTE TO EFFECT ECONOMIES TOO.) PM ALSO CRITICIZED PERU'S WAGE-PRICE POLICIES, REFERRING TO RECENT AND COSTLY STRIKES. HE DID NOT SAY WHAT HE PROPOSES TO DO ABOUT THE LABOR SITUATION.

3. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. MORALES BERMUDEZ REITERATED THE REGIME'S OPPOSITION TO POLITICAL PARTIES, STATING THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO ESTABLISH A "POLITICAL ORGANIZATION" WHICH WILL BACK THE REVOLUTION.

4. MUNICIPAL COUNCILS. HE DISCUSSED MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, STATING THAT THE GOVERNMENT HOPES TO ESTABLISH SEVERAL EXPERIMENTAL MUNICIPAL COUNCILS. HE EXPLAINED THAT THIS WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S IDEA OF "POPULAR PARTICIPATION". DELEGATES REPRESENTING THE WORKERS, SHANTY TOWN, SHOPKEEPERS, ETC. WOULD SIT ON THESE COUNCILS. (HE DID NOT ELABORATE ON THE GOVERNMENT'S SCHEME TO REPLACE DIRECTLY-ELECTED COUNCILS, ABOLISHED IN 1969, WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM SOCIETY'S SECTORS, AS DEFINED BY THE MILITARY REGIME.)

5. TRANSFER OF THE PRESS. IN THE FIRST PUBLIC HINT THAT THE NEWSPAPERS MAY NOT BE TURNED OVER TO THE SOCIAL SECTORS ON JULY 1 AS PLANNED, MORALES BERMUDEZ SAID THAT THIS QUESTION IS UNDER STUDY AND THAT THE TURNOVER WOULD HAVE TO BE "IN ITS TOTALITY". (IN OTHER WORDS, IF ALL THE SOCIAL SECTORS ARE NOT READY TO TAKE OVER THE PRESS, PRESUMABLY THEN NONE OF THE SECTORS WOULD GET A NEWSPAPER. THE GOVERNMENT COULD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THEREFORE BEG THE ISSUE, FOR EXAMPLE, OF WHETHER THE DIVIDED INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY SECTOR WILL GET LA PRENSA OR WHETHER THE OPPOSITION TEACHERS WILL HAVE A NEWSPAPER, ETC.)

6. COMMENT. MORALES BERMUDEZ' STYLE CONTRASTS SHARPLY WITH OTHER SENTION REGIME OFFICIALS, WHO CANNOT SEEM TO SPEAK PUBLICLY WITHOUT LAMBASTING "IMPERIALISM". FOR EXAMPLE, ON MARCH 29 (ACCORDING TO EL COMERCIO), CARLOS DELGADO DECLARED

THAT "NORTH AMERICAN IMPERIALISM" IS THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY OF
THE REVOLUTION. DELGADO IS THE NUMBER TWO MAN AT SINAMOS,
AND ONE OF THE PRESIDENT'S CLOSEST ADVISORS. ON APRIL 1
(ACCORDING TO EXPRESO AND OTHER NEWSPAPERS), ENERGY AND MINES MINISTE
R
FERNANDEZ
MALDONADO ACCUSED "IMPERIALISM" OF TRYING TO DESTROY THE
PERUVIAN REVOLUTION BY "DESTABILIZING" IT AS IT HAD DONE IN
OTHER LATITUDES. EARLIER, FERNANDEZ MALDONADO HAD CROWED ABOUT
VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIAN VICTORIES OVER "THE BIGGEST IMPERIALIST
POWER ON THE PLANET". MORALES BERMUDEZ' STYLE IS A WELCOME
RELIEF FROM THE RHETORIC SPEWED OUT BY FROM SO MANY OTHER MEMBERS
OF VELASCO'S GOVERNMENT.
DEAN

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